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# General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

*Official Records*

7th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 23 September 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Address by the President**

**The President**: This general debate of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly takes place at a time of enormous challenges for the United Nations. The participation of a significant number of heads of State and Government in the debate sends a strong message of support for the United Nations and reaffirms to the people of the world that their leaders are at the forefront of international efforts to address the broad range of issues of importance to them. As President of the fifty-eighth session, the presence of world leaders here is encouraging to me.

Some 58 years on, recent unfolding, and often tragic, developments worldwide pose a serious challenge for the United Nations, and particularly for the General Assembly. That is particularly so in the areas enshrined in the Charter as the Organization's primary objectives: the promotion of economic and social advancement, tolerance and peace and the maintenance of international peace and security, including collective security. Lately, we have engaged in a process of self-searching and re-examination, looking, for example, at the goals we have set for ourselves in the economic and social fields and at our efforts to keep peace in the world. Reform and revitalization of our Organization is key to the success of our initiatives, and thus is among the issues we are reviewing.

The safety and security of United Nations personnel has high priority, and has taken on renewed urgency following yet another attack on the United Nations in Baghdad. As we express our sympathy over yet more loss of life and injury, I wish to assure the Secretary-General of our continuing support for his efforts to protect United Nations staff.

Our achievements over the past decade are unquestionable, but many of our initiatives are useful only if they lead to concrete action. We the Member States of the General Assembly are partners, and must work cooperatively to ensure that urgent and necessary action is taken to implement those initiatives, if we are to remain relevant. In doing so, I believe it to be in our best interests to be consistent in our respect for the Charter and for international law, to demonstrate by our action that the General Assembly has not only the capacity but also the political will to constructively address and resolve the complex problems of the world and to close the gap between our agreed objectives and the resources needed to implement them.

The General Assembly has oversight of the United Nations system as a whole, and hence has before it the full range of international issues. As advocate, supervisor and policy-making body, it must give the direction necessary to ensure coherence in the system, so that the Organization may respond in a holistic manner to the many challenges it faces. Heads of State and Government must bring new dynamism to the General Assembly during this session. The political direction that they will provide will be key to enabling

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the Assembly effectively to address critical issues such as sustainable development, poverty alleviation, violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, terrorism, and United Nations reform. This is the direction we need for the entire year of this session, including from January to September 2004, for it is during this less intensive second part of the session, so to speak, that we can look more reflectively at the decisions we have taken in the fall and begin the critical task of implementation and other aspects of the Assembly's work.

We all know the problems. I will be looking to heads of State and Government and to other high-level participants in this general debate for their advice on how best we may arrive at the solutions.

In accordance with the decision taken at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly will hear a presentation by the Secretary-General of his annual report on the work of the Organization under agenda item 10 of the provisional agenda.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

**The Secretary-General** (*spoke in French*): The last 12 months have been very painful for those of us who believe in collective answers to our common problems and challenges.

In many countries, terrorism has once again brought death and suffering to innocent people. In the Middle East, and in certain parts of Africa, violence has continued to escalate. On the Korean peninsula and elsewhere, the threat of nuclear proliferation casts an ominous shadow across the landscape. And barely one month ago, in Baghdad, the United Nations itself suffered a brutal and deliberate assault, in which the international community lost some of its most talented servants. Yesterday the United Nations was again attacked, and it was only because of prompt action by the Iraqi police that another major disaster was averted. Unfortunately, an Iraqi policeman lost his life.

On this occasion, I wish to convey my most sincere condolences to the family of that brave police officer. But I am thinking also of the 19 people, including local United Nations staff, who were injured in the attack. I wish them all a swift recovery, and I hope that all those who have been injured or were killed in the war — soldiers and innocent civilians — will remain in our prayers.

In this context, I deplore — as all present here do as well, I am sure — the brutal attack that nearly killed Ms. Akila al-Hashemi, a member of the Governing Council. I pray, too, for her swift recovery.

(*spoke in English*)

Excellencies, the United Nations is you. You are the United Nations. The staff who were killed or injured in the attack on our Baghdad headquarters were your staff. You had given them a mandate to assist the suffering Iraqi people and to help them recover their sovereignty.

In future — not only in Iraq but wherever the United Nations is engaged — we must take more effective measures to protect the security of our staff. I count on your full support — legal, political and financial.

Meanwhile, let me reaffirm the great importance I attach to a successful outcome in Iraq. Whatever view each of us may take of the events of recent months, it is vital for all of us that the outcome be a stable and democratic Iraq, at peace with itself and with its neighbours, and contributing to stability in the region.

Subject to satisfactory security considerations, the United Nations system is prepared to play its full role in working for a satisfactory outcome in Iraq, and to do so as part of an international effort — an effort by the whole international community — pulling together on the basis of a sound and viable policy. If it takes extra time and patience to forge a policy that is collective, coherent and workable, then I, for one, would regard that time as well spent. Indeed, this is how we must approach all the many pressing crises that confront us today.

Three years ago, when you came here for the Millennium Summit, we shared a vision of global solidarity and security, expressed in the Millennium Declaration. But recent events have called that consensus into question.

All of us know that there are new threats that must be faced — or, perhaps, old threats in new and dangerous combinations: new forms of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

But while some consider these threats as self-evidently the main challenge to world peace and security, others feel more immediately menaced by small arms employed in civil conflict, or by so-called

"soft threats" such as the persistence of extreme poverty, the disparity of income between and within societies, the spread of infectious diseases, or climate change and environmental degradation.

In truth, we do not have to choose. The United Nations must confront all these threats and challenges — new and old, "hard" and "soft". It must be fully engaged in the struggle for development and for poverty eradication, starting with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; in the joint struggle to protect our common environment; and in the struggle for human rights, democracy and good governance.

In fact, all these struggles are linked. We now see, with chilling clarity, that a world in which many millions of people endure brutal oppression and extreme misery will never be fully secure, even for its most privileged inhabitants.

Yet the "hard" threats, such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, are real and cannot be ignored. Terrorism is not a problem only for rich countries. Ask the people of Bali, Bombay, Nairobi or Casablanca. Weapons of mass destruction do not threaten only the western or northern world. Ask the people of Iran, or of Halabja, in Iraq.

Where we disagree, it seems, is on how to respond to these threats. Since this Organization was founded, States have generally sought to deal with threats to the peace through containment and deterrence, by a system based on collective security and on the United Nations Charter. Article 51 of the Charter prescribes that all States, if attacked, retain the inherent right of self-defence. But until now it has been understood that when States go beyond that and decide to use force to deal with broader threats to international peace and security, they need the unique legitimacy provided by the United Nations.

Now, some say this understanding is no longer tenable, since an armed attack with weapons of mass destruction could be launched at any time, without warning, or by a clandestine group. Rather than wait for that to happen, they argue, States have the right and obligation to use force pre-emptively, even on the territory of other States, and even while the weapons systems that might be used to attack them are still being developed. According to this argument, States are not obliged to wait until there is agreement in the Security Council. Instead, they reserve the right to act unilaterally, or in ad hoc coalitions.

This logic represents a fundamental challenge to the principles on which, however imperfectly, world peace and stability have rested for the last fifty-eight years. My concern is that, if it were to be adopted, it would set precedents that resulted in a proliferation of the unilateral and lawless use of force, with or without justification.

But it is not enough to denounce unilateralism, unless we also face up squarely to the concerns that make some States feel uniquely vulnerable, since it is those concerns that drive them to take unilateral action. We must show that those concerns can, and will, be addressed effectively through collective action.

We have come to a fork in the road. This may be a moment no less decisive than in 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded. At that time, a group of far-sighted leaders, led and inspired by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, were determined to make the second half of the twentieth century different from the first half. They saw that the human race had only one world to live in, and that unless it managed its affairs prudently, all human beings might perish. So they drew up rules to govern international behaviour and founded a network of institutions, with the United Nations at its centre, in which the peoples of the world could work together for the common good.

Now we must decide whether it is possible to continue on the basis agreed then, or whether radical changes are needed. And we must not shy away from questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal.

Among those instruments, none is more important than the Security Council itself. In my recent report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, I drew attention to the urgent need for the Council to regain the confidence of States and of world public opinion — both by demonstrating its ability to deal effectively with the most difficult issues and by becoming more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geopolitical realities of today.

The Council needs to consider how it will deal with the possibility that individual States may use force pre-emptively against perceived threats. Its members may need to begin a discussion on the criteria for an

early authorization of coercive measures to address certain types of threats — for instance, terrorist groups armed with weapons of mass destruction. And they still need to engage in serious discussion of the best way to respond to threats of genocide or other comparable massive violations of human rights — an issue which I raised myself from this podium in 1999. Once again, this year, our collective response to events of this type — in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Liberia — has been hesitant and tardy.

As for the composition of the Council, which has been on the agenda of the Assembly for over a decade, virtually all Member States agree that the Council should be enlarged, but there is no agreement on the details.

I respectfully suggest to you, Excellencies, that in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the Council and the Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency.

But the Security Council is not the only institution that needs strengthening. As you know, I am doing my best to make the Secretariat more effective, and I look to this Assembly to support my efforts. Indeed, in my report I also suggested that this Assembly itself needs to be strengthened, and that the role of the Economic and Social Council — and the role of the United Nations as a whole in economic and social affairs, including its relationship to the Bretton Woods institutions-needs to be rethought and reinvigorated. I even suggested that the role of the Trusteeship Council could be reviewed, in the light of new kinds of responsibility that you have given to the United Nations in recent years.

In short, I believe the time is ripe for a hard look at fundamental policy issues and at the structural changes that may be needed in order to strengthen them. History is a harsh judge: it will not forgive us if we let this moment pass.

For my part, I intend to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to which I will assign four tasks: first, to examine current challenges to peace and security; second, to consider the contribution which collective action can make in addressing these challenges; third, to review the functioning of major organs of the United Nations and the relationship between them; and fourth, to recommend ways of strengthening the United Nations, through reform of its institutions and processes. The panel will focus primarily on threats to peace and security. But it will also need to examine other global challenges, insofar as these may influence or connect with those threats.

I will ask the panel to report back to me before the beginning of the next session of the General Assembly so that I can make recommendations to you at that session. But only you can take the firm and clear decisions that will be needed. Those decisions might include far-reaching institutional reforms. Indeed, I hope they will.

But institutional reforms alone will not suffice. Even the most perfect instrument will fail, unless people put it to good use.

The United Nations is by no means a perfect instrument, but it is a precious one. I urge you to seek agreement on ways of improving it, but above all of using it as its founders intended: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, to re-establish the basic conditions for justice and the rule of law, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The world may have changed, but those aims are as valid and urgent as ever. We must keep them firmly in our sights.

**The President**: I thank the Secretary-General for his presentation.

**Agenda item 9**

**General debate**

**The President**: Before giving the floor to the first speaker for this morning, I should like to remind members that the list of speakers was created on the basis that statements will have a time limit of up to 15 minutes per statement. In the light of that given time frame, I should like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly.

I also should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to the decision taken by the Assembly at previous sessions, namely, that the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General

Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered is strongly discouraged.

In that connection, I should like to suggest that speakers in the general debate, after delivering their statements, should leave the General Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to proceed in the same manner during the general debate of the fifty-eighth session?

*It was so decided.*

**Address by Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

*Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Da Silva** (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Let my first words before this world parliament be of confidence in the human capacity to overcome challenges and to move towards higher forms of partnership, both within and among nations. On behalf of the Brazilian people, I reaffirm our belief in the United Nations. Its role in promoting peace and social justice remains irreplaceable.

I pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the leadership that he has shown in defence of a world united through respect for international law and solidarity among nations.

The Assembly convenes under the impact of the brutal attack on the United Nations Mission in Baghdad, which took the life of its head officer, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, our compatriot Sergio Vieira de Mello. Sergio's renowned competence was nurtured by the only weapons in which he believed: dialogue, persuasion and, above all, concern for those who are most vulnerable. On behalf of the United Nations, he showed a tolerant, peace-loving and courageous humanism that mirrors Brazil's libertarian soul. Sergio's sacrifice, and that of his colleagues, must not be in vain. We can best honour his memory by redoubling our efforts to protect human dignity wherever it is threatened.

I warmly greet Mr. Julian Hunte, who was elected President of the Assembly at a particularly grave moment in the history of the United Nations. The international community faces enormous political, economic and social challenges requiring an accelerated pace of reform. Only thus will our collective decisions and actions be truly respected and effective.

In my nine months as President of Brazil, I have conferred with leaders of all continents, and I have sensed in them a deep concern to defend and strengthen multilateral institutions. The improvement of the multilateral system is a necessary counterpart to democratic practice within nations. Every nation that practices democracy must strive to ensure that in international affairs, decision-making is equally open, transparent, legitimate and representative. The tragedies that have befallen Iraq and the Middle East can be overcome only within a multilateral framework — one in which the United Nations is given a central role.

In Iraq, the prevailing climate of insecurity and growing tension makes national reconstruction an even more complex task. That impasse can be overcome only under the leadership of the United Nations — leadership not only in re-establishing acceptable security conditions, but also in guiding the political process towards the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty as soon as possible. We must not shy away from our collective responsibilities. A war can perhaps be won single-handedly, but peace — lasting peace — cannot be secured without the support of all.

Two years later, the images of the barbaric attack on 11 September still haunt us. There is a commendable willingness today to adopt more effective measures to deal with terrorism, with weapons of mass destruction and with organized crime. Unfortunately, there are also worrisome signs of an attempt to discredit the Organization and even to divest the United Nations of its political authority. Let there be no ambiguity on this subject: no matter how invaluable its humanitarian work, the United Nations

was conceived to do more than simply to clear away the rubble of conflicts that it was unable to prevent. Our central task is to preserve people from the scourge of war, to negotiate settlements inspired by the principles and objectives of the San Francisco Charter. Let us not place greater trust on military might than on the institutions we created with the light of reason and the vision of history.

Reform of the United Nations has become an urgent task, given the present risks to the international political order.

The Security Council must be fully empowered to deal with crises and threats to peace. It must therefore be equipped with the tools for effective action. Above all, its decisions must seen as legitimate by the community of nations as a whole. Its composition, in particular as concerns permanent membership, cannot remain unaltered almost 60 years later. It can no longer ignore the changing world. More specifically, it must take into account the emergence on the international scene of developing countries. They have become important actors that often exercise a critical role in ensuring the pacific settlement of disputes.

Brazil believes that it has a useful contribution to make. It seeks not to advance an exclusive conception of international security, but rather to give expression to the perceptions and aspirations of a region that today is a hallmark of peaceful coexistence among its members and that is a force for international stability. Given the support we received in South America and beyond, Brazil is encouraged to continue advocating for a Security Council that better reflects contemporary reality.

We also favour an Economic and Social Council capable of bringing about a fair and just economic order. It is crucial that the Economic and Social Council regain the role bestowed upon it by the founding fathers of the Organization. We wish to see the Economic and Social Council cooperate actively with the Security Council in preventing conflicts and in nation building.

The General Assembly, in turn, must be strengthened politically so as to focus on priority issues and avoid duplication of effort. The General Assembly has fulfilled a historically important role by convening major conferences and other meetings on human rights, the environment, population, women's rights, racial discrimination, AIDS and social development. However, the General Assembly should not hesitate to assume its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security. Our Organization has shown that there are legal and political alternatives to a veto-induced paralysis and to actions lacking multilateral endorsement.

Peace, security, development and social justice are indivisible. Brazil has endeavoured to practice with utmost consistency the principles for which it stands. The new relationship we are forging with our South American neighbours is founded on mutual respect, friendship and cooperation.

We are moving beyond our shared history and geography to create a unique sense of kinship and partnership. In this context, our relationship with Argentina remains crucial.

South America and Latin America are increasingly seen as a region of peace, democracy and development that aspires to become a new outpost for growth in a stagnating world economy.

We are deepening the already significant ties with traditional partners in North America and Europe, but we also seek to widen and diversify our international presence. Our relations with China and the Russian Federation have revealed unexpected complementarities.

We are proud to be the country with the second largest population of African descent in the world. In November, I will be travelling to five countries in Southern Africa to foster economic, political, social and cultural cooperation. With the same goal in mind, we will also host a summit meeting between South American countries and the member States of the League of Arab States. With India and South Africa we have established a trilateral forum for political consultations and joint projects.

The protectionism practised by rich countries unfairly penalizes efficient producers in developing countries. Today this is the greatest obstacle to launching a new era of economic and social progress. Brazil and its partners in the G-22 maintained during the World Trade Organization summit meeting at Cancun that the crucial goal of effectively opening markets is achievable through pragmatic and mutually reinforcing negotiations that bring about an effective opening of markets. I reaffirm our willingness to travel along a path that converges towards solutions that

benefit all countries, taking into account the interests of developing countries.

We are entirely in favour of free trade as long as we can all compete on a level playing field. Liberalization should not require countries to abandon the prerogative of formulating industrial, technological, social and environmental policy. In Brazil we are engaged in setting up a new framework that balances economic stability and social inclusion. From that standpoint, trade negotiations are not an end in themselves, but rather a means to foster development and overcome poverty. International trade should be a tool not only for creating wealth, but also for its distribution.

I reaffirm before this truly universal Assembly the appeal I launched at the Davos and Porto Alegre forums and at the Enlarged Summit of the G-8 at Evian. We must wage — both politically and materially — the only war from which we will all emerge victorious: the war against hunger and extreme poverty.

The eradication of hunger in the world is a moral and political imperative. And we all know that it is possible. What is truly required is political will.

I do not wish to dwell on indications of barbarism. I would rather acknowledge ethical and social progress, no matter how modest. Yet we cannot dismiss the statistics that expose the terrible scourge of extreme poverty and hunger in the world. Hunger today touches a fourth of the world's population, including 300 million children. Daily, 24,000 people fall victim to malnutrition-related diseases.

Nothing is more absurd or intolerable than the pervasiveness of hunger in the twenty-first century, this golden age of science and technology.

With each passing day, human intelligence enlarges the horizons of the possible and achieves prodigious feats. Yet, hunger persists and, what is worse, it is spreading throughout various regions of the planet.

The more we seem to approach the divine through our creative abilities, the more humanity betrays its aspirations through our inability to respect and protect our fellow creatures. The more we celebrate God by generating riches, the more we hurt our ideals by not minimally sharing them.

What is the use of all our science and technology, of all the abundance and luxury that it has generated, if we do not put it to use, guaranteeing the most sacred of rights: the right to life?

I recall the penetrating warning, made by Pope Paul VI 36 years ago, but which is still surprisingly relevant: "The starving people of the world dramatically address their plea to the wealthy".

Hunger is an emergency, and it should be dealt with as such. The eradication of hunger is a civilizational challenge that requires that we seek a shortcut to the future. Will we act to eliminate hunger or will we forsake our credibility through omission? We no longer have the right to allege that we were not home when they knocked at our door asking for solidarity. We have no right to say to the famished who have waited for so long: come back next century. The true path to peace is to fight hunger and extreme poverty to the end, in a campaign of solidarity that unites the planet rather than deepening the divisions and the hatred that inflame people and sow terror.

Despite the failure of systems that favour the generation of wealth without reducing extreme poverty, many people still persist in their short-sightedness and greed.

Since my inauguration as President of Brazil on 1 January, significant progress has been made on the economic front. Stability is back and the groundwork for a renewed cycle of sustained growth has been laid. We will continue to work hard to balance public accounts and to reduce external vulnerability. We will spare no effort to increase exports, raise the savings rate, attract foreign investment and start growing again.

Yet at the same time we must strive to cope with the need for food, jobs, education and health services for millions of Brazilians living below the poverty line. We are committed to bringing about major social reform in the country.

Hunger is the most dramatic and urgent expression of a structural imbalance requiring correction through integrated policies that foster full citizenship. That is why I launched the "zero hunger" programme in Brazil. It seeks to eradicate hunger and its root causes in the shortest possible time by promoting major solidarity and wide-ranging programmes bringing together Government, civil society and the private sector. The results of those

emergency and structural measures are already benefiting 4 million individuals who were previously denied the right to a daily meal. The goal of this programme is to guarantee that no Brazilians will go hungry.

The United Nations adopted the highly acclaimed Millennium Development Goals. The Food and Agriculture Organization has at its disposal outstanding technical and social expertise. But we need to make a qualitative leap in the global endeavour to fight hunger. That is why I proposed setting up a global fund to fight hunger and suggested means to make it operational. Other proposals have been put forward as well, some already integrated into existing United Nations programmes.

What has been lacking until now is the indispensable political will of us all, especially of those countries in a position to contribute most. Creating new funds is of no use if no resources are committed to them. The Millennium Development Goals are very worthy, but if we remain passive, if our collective behaviour remains unchanged, those Goals may never materialize, and the ensuing frustration will be immense.

Now more than ever, good intentions must give rise to concrete gestures. We must put commitments into practice. We must practice what we preach — with audacity, good sense and our feet firmly on the ground, yet boldly, and with new methods, solutions and intense social participation.

For this reason, I am submitting a proposal for consideration by the General Assembly to establish a world committee within the United Nations itself to fight hunger. It would be made up of heads of State or Government from all continents with the purpose of unifying and operationalizing proposals. We hope to attract donations from developed and developing countries according to their capacities, as well as from large private enterprises and non-governmental organizations.

My life experience and political history have taught me to believe above all in the power of dialogue. I will never forget Gandhi's invaluable lesson that when out of violence something good appears to result, this good is at best short-lived, while the evil that it produces is enduring. Democratic dialogue is the most efficient of all tools for change. With the same determination that goes into my endeavours and those of my partners to make Brazilian society more just and humane, I will invest in the establishment of international partnerships that foster equitable development and a more peace-loving, tolerant and unified world.

This century, so full of technological and material promise, must not be allowed to slide into political and spiritual decline. It is our obligation to mould, under the reinvigorated leadership of the United Nations, an international climate of peace and conciliation. True peace will bloom from democracy, from respect for international law, from the dismantling of deadly weapons arsenals and, above all, from the final eradication of hunger in the world.

We cannot afford to frustrate such high hopes. The greatest and noblest challenge facing humanity is precisely that of becoming more humane. It is time to call peace by its true name: social justice. I am convinced that together we shall be able to grasp this historic opportunity to bring about justice.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency the President of the United States of America.

*Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Bush**: Twenty-four months ago, and yesterday in the memory of America, the centre of New York City became a battlefield, and a graveyard, and the symbol of an unfinished war. Since that day, terrorists have struck in Bali, in Mombassa, in

Casablanca, in Riyadh, in Jakarta, in Jerusalem, measuring the advance of their cause in the chaos and innocent suffering they leave behind.

Last month, terrorists brought their war to the United Nations itself. The United Nations headquarters in Baghdad stood for order and compassion. For that reason, the terrorists decided it must be destroyed. Among the 22 people who were murdered was Sergio Vieira de Mello. Over the decades, that good and brave man from Brazil gave help to the afflicted in Bangladesh, Cyprus, Mozambique, Lebanon, Cambodia, Central Africa, Kosovo and East Timor, and was aiding the people of Iraq in their time of need. America joins you, his colleagues, in honouring the memory of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and the memory of all those who died with him in the service of the United Nations.

By the victims they choose and by the means they use, the terrorists have clarified the struggle we are in. Those who target relief workers for death have set themselves against all humanity. Those who incite murder and celebrate suicide reveal their contempt for life itself. They have no place in any religious faith, they have no claim on the world's sympathy, and they should have no friend in this Hall.

Events during the past two years have set before us the clearest of divides: between those who seek order and those who spread chaos, between those who work for peaceful change and those who adopt the methods of gangsters, between those who honour the rights of man and those who deliberately take the lives of men, women and children without mercy or shame.

Between those alternatives there is no neutral ground. All Governments that support terror are complicit in a war against civilization. No Government should ignore the threat of terror because to look the other way gives terrorists the chance to regroup, recruit and prepare. All nations that fight terror as if the lives of their own people depended on it will earn the favourable judgement of history.

The former regimes of Afghanistan and Iraq knew those alternatives and made their choices. The Taliban was a sponsor and servant of terrorism. When confronted, that regime chose defiance, and that regime is no more. Afghanistan's President, who is here today, now represents a free people who are building a decent and just society. They are building a nation fully joined in the war against terror.

The regime of Saddam Hussain cultivated ties to terror while it built weapons of mass destruction. It used those weapons in acts of mass murder and refused to account for them when confronted by the world. The Security Council was right to be alarmed. The Security Council was right to demand that Iraq destroy its illegal weapons and prove that it had done so. The Security Council was right to vow serious consequences if Iraq refused to comply. And because there were consequences — because a coalition of nations acted to defend the peace and the credibility of the United Nations — Iraq is free, and today we are joined by the representatives of a liberated country.

Saddam Hussain's monuments have been removed, and not only his statues. The true monuments of his rule and his character — the torture chambers, the rape rooms and the prison cells for innocent children — are closed. And as we discover the killing fields and mass graves of Iraq, the true scale of Saddam's cruelty is being revealed.

The Iraqi people are meeting hardships and challenges, like every nation that has set out on the path of democracy. Yet, their future promises lives of dignity and freedom, and that is a world away from the squalid, vicious tyranny they have known. Across Iraq, life is being improved by liberty. Across the Middle East, people are safer because an unstable aggressor has been removed from power. Across the world, nations are more secure because an ally of terror has fallen.

Our actions in Afghanistan and Iraq were supported by many Governments, and America is grateful to each one. I also recognize that some of the sovereign nations of the Assembly disagreed with our actions. Yet, there was and there remains unity among us on the fundamental principles and objectives of the United Nations. We are dedicated to the defence of our collective security and to the advance of human rights. Those permanent commitments call us to great work in the world, work that we must do together. So, let us move forward. First, we must stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq as they build free and stable countries. The terrorists and their allies fear and fight this progress above all because free people embrace hope over resentment and choose peace over violence.

The United Nations has been a friend of the Afghan people, distributing food and medicine, helping refugees return home, advising on a new constitution

and helping to prepare the way for nationwide elections. NATO has taken over the United Nations mandated security force in Kabul. American and coalition forces continue to track and defeat al Qaeda terrorists and the remnants of the Taliban. Our efforts to rebuild that country go on. I have recently proposed to spend an additional $1.2 billion for the Afghan reconstruction effort, and I urge other nations to continue contributing to that important cause.

In the nation of Iraq, the United Nations is carrying out vital and effective work every day. By the end of 2004, more than 90 per cent of Iraqi children under age five will have been immunized against preventable diseases such as polio, tuberculosis and measles, thanks to the hard work and high ideals of UNICEF. Iraq's food distribution system is operational, delivering nearly a half million tons of food per month, thanks to the skill and expertise of the World Food Programme.

Our international coalition in Iraq is meeting its responsibilities. We are conducting precision raids against terrorists and holdouts of the former regime. Those killers are at war with the Iraqi people. They have made Iraq the central front in the war on terror. And they will be defeated. Our coalition has made sure that Iraq's former dictator will never again use weapons of mass destruction. We are now interviewing Iraqi citizens and analysing records of the old regime to reveal the full extent of its weapons programmes and its long campaign of deception. We are training Iraqi police, border guards and a new army so that the Iraqi people can assume full responsibility for their own security.

At the same time, our coalition is helping to improve the daily lives of the Iraqi people. The old regime built palaces while letting schools decay, so we are rebuilding more than a thousand schools. The old regime starved hospitals of resources, so we have helped to supply and reopen hospitals across Iraq. The old regime built up armies and weapons while allowing the nation's infrastructure to crumble, so we are rehabilitating power plants, water and sanitation facilities, bridges and airports. I have proposed to Congress that the United States provide additional funding for our work in Iraq, the greatest financial commitment of its kind since the Marshall Plan.

Having helped to liberate Iraq, we will honour our pledges to Iraq, and by helping the Iraqi people build a stable and peaceful country we will make our own countries more secure.

The primary goal of our coalition in Iraq is self-government for the people of Iraq, reached by an orderly and democratic process. That process must unfold according to the needs of Iraqis, neither hurried nor delayed by the wishes of other parties. And the United Nations can contribute greatly to the cause of Iraqi self-government.

America is working with friends and allies on a new Security Council resolution, which will expand the United Nation's role in Iraq. As in the aftermath of other conflicts, the United Nations should assist in developing a constitution, training civil servants and conducting free and fair elections. Iraq now has a Governing Council, the first truly representative institution in that country. Iraq's new leaders are showing the openness and tolerance that democracy requires, and they are also showing courage. Yet every young democracy needs the help of friends. Now the nation of Iraq needs and deserves our aid, and all nations of good will should step forward and provide that support.

The success of a free Iraq will be watched and noted throughout the region. Millions will see that freedom, equality and material progress are possible at the heart of the Middle East. Leaders in the region will face the clearest evidence that free institutions and open societies are the only path to long-term national success and dignity. And a transformed Middle East would benefit the entire world by undermining the ideologies that export violence to other lands.

Iraq as a dictatorship had great power to destabilize the Middle East. Iraq as a democracy will have great power to inspire the Middle East. The advance of democratic institutions in Iraq is setting an example that others, including the Palestinian people, would be wise to follow. The Palestinian cause is betrayed by leaders who cling to power by feeding old hatreds and destroying the good work of others. The Palestinian people deserve their own State. They will gain that State by embracing new leaders committed to reform, to fighting terror and to building peace.

All parties in the Middle East must meet their responsibilities and carry out the commitments they made at Aqaba. Israel must work to create the conditions that will allow a peaceful Palestinian State to emerge. Arab nations must cut off funding and other

support for terrorist organizations. America will work with every nation in the region that acts boldly for the sake of peace.

A second challenge we must confront together is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Outlaw regimes that possess nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them would be able to use blackmail and create chaos in entire regions. Those weapons could be used by terrorists to bring sudden disaster and suffering on a scale we can scarcely imagine. The deadly combination of outlaw regimes, terror networks and weapons of mass murder is a peril that cannot be ignored or wished away. If such a danger is allowed to fully materialize, all words, all protests, will come too late.

Nations of the world must have the wisdom and the will to stop grave threats before they arrive. One crucial step is to secure the most dangerous materials at their source. For more than a decade, the United States has worked with Russia and other States of the former Soviet Union to dismantle, destroy or secure weapons and dangerous materials left over from another era.

Last year in Canada, the G-8 nations agreed to provide up to 20 billion dollars, half of it from the United States, to fight this proliferation risk over the next ten years. Since then, six additional countries have joined the effort. More are needed, and I urge other nations to help us meet this danger.

We are also improving our capability to interdict lethal materials in transit. Through our Proliferation Security Initiative, eleven nations are preparing to search planes, ships, trains and trucks carrying suspect cargo and to seize weapons or missile shipments that raise proliferation concerns. These nations have agreed on a set of interdiction principles consistent with current legal authorities, and we are working to expand the Proliferation Security Initiative to other countries. We are determined to keep the world's most destructive weapons away from all our shores and out of the hands of our common enemies.

Because proliferators will use any route or channel that is open to them, we need the broadest possible cooperation to stop them. Today I ask the United Nations Security Council to adopt a new antiproliferation resolution. That resolution should call on all Members of the United Nations to criminalize the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to enact strict export controls consistent with international standards and to secure any and all sensitive materials within their own borders. The United States stands ready to help any nation draft these new laws and to assist in their enforcement.

A third challenge we share is a challenge to our conscience. We must act decisively to meet the humanitarian crises of our time. The United States has begun to carry out the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, aimed at preventing AIDS on a massive scale and treating millions who have the disease already. We have pledged 15 billion dollars over five years to fight AIDS around the world.

My country is acting to save lives from famine as well. We are providing more than 1.4 billion dollars in global emergency food aid, and I have asked our United States Congress for 200 million dollars for a new famine fund so that we can act quickly when the first signs of famine appear. Every nation on every continent should generously add their resources to the fight against disease and desperate hunger.

There is another humanitarian crisis, spreading, yet hidden from view. Each year, an estimated eight to nine hundred thousand human beings are bought, sold or forced across the world's borders. Among them are hundreds of thousands of teenage girls and others as young as five who fall victim to the sex trade. This commerce in human life generates billions of dollars each year, much of which is used to finance organized crime. There is a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable. The victims of the sex trade see little of life before they see the very worst of life — an underground of brutality and lonely fear. Those who create these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished. Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others, and Governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery.

This problem has appeared in my own country and we are working to stop it. The Protect Act, which I signed into law this year, makes it a crime for any person to enter the United States or for any citizen to travel abroad for the purpose of sex tourism involving children. The Department of Justice is actively investigating sex tour operators and patrons, who can face up to 30 years in prison. Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the United States is using sanctions against Governments to discourage human trafficking.

The victims of this industry also need help from Members of the United Nations. This begins with clear standards and the certainty of punishment under the laws of every country. Today, some nations make it a crime to sexually abuse children abroad. Such conduct should be a crime in all nations. Governments should inform travellers of the harm this industry does and the severe punishments that will fall on its patrons. The American Government is committing $50 million to support the good work of organizations that are rescuing women and children from exploitation and giving them shelter, medical treatment and the hope of a new life. I urge other Governments to do their part.

We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time.

All the challenges I have spoken of this morning require urgent attention and moral clarity. Helping Afghanistan and Iraq to succeed as free nations in a transformed region; cutting off the avenues of proliferation; abolishing modern forms of slavery — these are the kinds of great tasks for which the United Nations was founded. In each case, careful discussion is needed and, also, decisive action. Our good intentions will be credited only if we achieve good outcomes. As an original signer of the United Nations Charter, the United States of America is committed to the United Nations and we show that commitment by working to fulfil the United Nations stated purposes and by giving meaning to its ideals.

The founding documents of the United Nations and the founding documents of America stand in the same tradition. Both assert that human beings should never be reduced to objects of power or commerce, because their dignity is inherent. Both recognize a moral law that stands above men and nations, but which must be defended and enforced by men and nations. And both point the way to peace — the peace that comes when all are free. We secure that peace with our courage and we must show that courage together.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Peru.

*Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Toledo Manrique** (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru has no doubt that multilateralism is the best instrument for confronting global challenges, as well as for guaranteeing peace and international security. For that reason, the United Nations is indispensable. All Member States must have the conviction to strengthen it, to contribute to its institutional regeneration and to reform it. With a reformed United Nations, we will continue our struggle against poverty; we will maintain the world development agenda; we will assure democracy; and we will fight decisively against drug trafficking and international terrorism.

The terrorist attacks taking place in different areas of the world and the threats to peace in several regions create an international climate of instability and insecurity that calls for urgent solutions. Terrorism conspires against the democracies of the world. Terrorism conspires against the health of the world economy. Terrorism contributes to making the poor even poorer. Peru strongly condemns the terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad and wishes to pay sincere tribute to all the victims, in particular to Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

We cannot accept terrorism as a political tool. In our case, the 20 years of violence bequeathed by the Sendero Luminoso is a hard lesson to cope with. According to the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, recently submitted to my Government, thousands of lives were lost and more than $30 billion in losses were reported. This report is

the result of a resolute political decision of our Government to make sure that Peru never again has to face irrational acts of terror.

Truth must also be a means to prevent impunity and to lead us to reconciliation with justice. My Government is firmly struggling against impunity. That is why we consider that the fugitives who fled Peru when the corrupt regime of the past decade was overthrown should answer to justice for the gravity of the crimes they committed. We will insure these people a fair trial and all the guarantees of due process, within the framework of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights and Peruvian law.

That is why we hope that our requests for extradition will be taken into account. Democratic States have the responsibility to avoid impunity. In this regard, the Peruvian State wishes in this Assembly to thank the 20 friendly countries that have announced their decision to detain anyone on the list of extraditables if they enter their territories.

Poverty, social exclusion and fundamentalist ideologies are among the causes of the current crises. The hopes of our countries to be part of an inclusive globalization are not bearing fruit. Despite some achievements at the national level, there is a wide chasm to bridge if we are to build such an inclusive globalization. For example, in the case of Peru, despite an unfavourable international environment the economy grew by 5.2 per cent last year, one of the highest rates in Latin America. Inflation was below 1 per cent, international reserves rose to their highest level yet, and exports reached unprecedented figures.

However, we must concede that all these indicators are not enough to make the common people feel the benefits of such macroeconomic achievements in their own pockets. Today, it is necessary for the global economy to reach an annual average growth of 7 to 8 per cent if we wish to reduce poverty and to create employment. If we in the developing world, particularly in Latin America, grow by 6 or 7 per cent, it will barely be enough to recover the per capita income of 1970. We have to achieve adequate growth as soon as possible. The poor cannot wait another 15 years for their economies to grow in a sustained manner that will reduce poverty.

Democratic governance in Latin America is at risk. There is no doubt that there is a correlation between the health of the world economy, social inclusion and democratic governance. World leaders cannot close their eyes. There is no possible governance without a reduction of poverty. We must be creative and courageous in order to ensure that Wall Street's macroeconomic requirements meet the expectations of Main Street.

Last year before this Assembly, I highlighted the need to defend democracy from market turbulence by creating innovative financial mechanisms. We said that the time had come to build a new global consensus to reaffirm democracy and re-evaluate development with social equity. Since then, Peru has been working on a series of initiatives in this regard. Last May, 19 democracies of Latin America and the Caribbean, members of the Rio Group — over which I have the honour to preside — approved a key document that we call the Cusco Consensus. This document comprises four Peruvian initiatives on innovative financial mechanisms that allow us to finance democratic governance in the region; to increase public investment in roads, hospitals and schools; to create jobs; and to supplement private investment.

In relation to one of these proposals, last August, jointly with the President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, we decided to work together on the establishment of the South American Infrastructure Authority project, which will operate as a fiduciary agency to facilitate the financing of investment projects for the integration of South America. I am sure that that experience can be duplicated in other parts of the world.

Likewise, we have signed a memorandum of understanding on physical and economic integration to set into motion three axes of development integration — in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador — on the road to South America's integration. Accordingly, Peru signed an agreement that will lead to the creation of a free trade zone with MERCOSUR. From this international forum, we would like reiterate that those efforts and achievements in the area of integration constitute decisive steps on the path towards building a South American community of nations. However, I wish to point out that, beyond the decisions that two or more countries of the subregion may take, it will be essential for the international community to commit itself to the initiatives emanating from an exercise in collective reflection.

Developing nations are concerned about the alarming increase in external vulnerabilities resulting from instability in financial flows and their impact on investment levels and economic growth in our region. Those countries also perceive the presence of protectionism in the area of trade, in particular on the part of certain industrialized nations. I would like to be frank in this connection: we ask developed countries not to demand that we open our markets while they protect their products with billions of dollars in subsidies every year, especially in the agricultural sector. Our countries can no longer withstand asymmetrical relations in the area of trade. The time has come to build a two-way business highway that is more transparent and predictable. We are being asked to open up our markets in the agricultural sector while there are still countries that are investing billions of dollars every day to subsidize their own products. Do not ask us to practice something that you do not practice yourselves. Our countries are aware of the fact that we have to be competitive, but we must build that two-way commercial highway.

Peru is especially concerned about the negative results of the recently held ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization in Cancun, which, despite some progress, was unable to reach consensus. There is a continuing desire for multilateralism and free trade in Peru. We therefore trust that there will be a return to negotiation in the next few months so as to realize the goals set out at Doha, which placed development foursquare on the agenda of the WTO.

We have an obligation to build a more just, secure and humane world. That is why today I ask the United Nations and our great friend of peace, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to exercise their great authority and prestige to promote within the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank and the member countries of the Group of 8 a wide debate on the innovative financial mechanisms that will make it possible to finance democratic governance in the region; increase public investment in schools, hospitals and roads; generate jobs and promote private investment. That is the only way by which globalization can be inclusive, and by which governance can be strengthened. May God bless peace in the world.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Peru for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## Address by Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the French Republic.

*Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Chirac** (*spoke in French*): Sergio Vieira de Mello was the pride of the United Nations. Murdered on 19 August along with his colleagues, he will remain in our memories. Let us dedicate this session to that great servant of the world and of peace.

The United Nations has just emerged from one of the most serious challenges in its history. Respect for the Charter and the use of force were at the heart of the debate. The war, which was launched without the Security Council's authorization, has undermined the multilateral system.

Having come to terms with that crisis, our Organization can now continue to move forward; for it is above all in this forum — the melting pot of the international order — that we must exercise our responsibilities to the world of today as well as to future generations.

In an open world no one can live in isolation, no one can act alone in the name of all and no one can accept the anarchy of a society without rules. There is no alternative to the United Nations. But in order to meet today's challenges, this fundamental choice, expressed by the Charter, requires a far-reaching reform of our Organization.

Multilateralism is crucial, because it ensures the participation of all in the management of world affairs. It is a guarantee of legitimacy and democracy, especially when decisions must be made with respect to the use of force or to the laying down of universal norms.

Multilateralism is effective. In Monterrey and Johannesburg, it allowed us to transcend North-South confrontation and to open the way to promising partnerships, in particular with the African continent.

Multilateralism is modern, because it alone makes it possible to comprehend contemporary problems globally and in all of their complexity.

First, let me touch on the settlement of conflicts that threaten international peace and security.

In Iraq, the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqis, who must have sole responsibility for their destiny, is essential for stability and reconstruction. It is up to the United Nations to lend its legitimacy to that process. It is also up to the United Nations to assist with the gradual transfer of administrative and economic responsibilities to the Iraqi institutions, according to a realistic timetable, and to help the Iraqis draft a constitution and hold general elections.

Finally, it is up to the United Nations to entrust a mandate to a multinational force, commanded, naturally, by the main troop contributor — that is, the United States — in order to ensure the security of Iraq and of all those helping to rebuild the country.

Thus the international community and the Iraqi people, united around a common project, will together put an end to the tragic decades of that great country's history.

In the Middle East, ravaged by despair and hatred, only strong political will on both sides to implement the law as stipulated by the United Nations can pave the way for a just and lasting solution.

The international community must restore a dynamic for peace. It must involve itself in the implementation of the road map. That should be the objective of the upcoming meeting of the Quartet, to be held at the ministerial level. France believes that the idea of a monitoring mechanism is as relevant as ever, and that the convening of an international conference is a goal to be attained as quickly as possible.

Given the present tense situation, France calls on the parties not to succumb to the temptation of a test of strength and of a futile radicalization.

Another major challenge is the fight against international terrorism. This fight is well under way, under the auspices of the Security Council and within the context of our treaties. The horror of 11 September cemented our common resolve. This threat strikes at the very heart of our democracies and our societies. We are using force to combat terrorism, but that is not enough. It will re-emerge again and again if we allow extremism and fanaticism to flourish — if we fail to realize that it seeks justification in the world's unresolved conflicts and economic and social imbalances.

Given the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we reject the policy of fait accompli. We must stand united to guarantee the universality of treaties and the effectiveness of non-proliferation regimes. In order to ensure compliance, we must also develop our means of action. France has proposed the creation of a permanent corps of inspectors under the authority of the Security Council. Let us give fresh impetus to this policy. Let us convene a summit meeting of the Security Council to outline a true plan of action of the United Nations against proliferation.

At this time, let us demand that North Korea completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its military programme. Let us demand that Iran sign and implement, unconditionally and without delay, a strengthened nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Sustainable development poses yet another challenge, because half of humankind is living in conditions of insecurity or extreme poverty. Will we be able to globalize solidarity, as our peoples demand, in response to the inevitable globalization of the economy?

We agree on the objectives. We are bound by the Millennium Goals. But, in order to attain those goals, strong political impetus remains necessary. I propose that heads of State and Government meet in New York in 2005 for a preliminary progress review. I hope that this session of the General Assembly will confirm the determination of States to overcome the failure of Cancun and to ensure the success of the Doha Development Round.

In order to carry out the missions entrusted to it and to remedy its blatant shortcomings, the United Nations must evolve. Three watchwords, I believe, must guide us: democracy, authority, effectiveness. Thanks to the Secretary-General, progress has been made, and new avenues are opening up. It is now up to States to move forward without further ado and to put

an end to the adverse consequences of the stalemate over reforms.

The United Nations is suffering from the current weakness of the General Assembly. And yet, it is here that a debate should be organized and a consensus crafted regarding solutions to major problems. A culture of confrontation must give way to a culture of action aimed at achieving our common goals, which we should determine together.

The primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security rests with the Security Council. It is therefore essential to its legitimacy that its composition reflect the state of the world. It must be expanded to include new permanent members, because the presence of major countries is necessary. France, naturally, is thinking of Germany and of Japan, but also of some leading countries of Asia, Africa and America. We also need new elected members, to make the Council even more representative. With the decisive impetus of the five permanent members, we all need to resume discussions, mindful of the general interest.

Such reform should be accompanied by a strengthening of the Council's authority. It is the Council that should set the bounds with respect to the use of force. No one can claim the right to use force unilaterally and preventively. Conversely, in the face of mounting threats, States must be assured that the Council has at its disposal the appropriate means of evaluation and of collective action, and that it has the will to act.

We all are very committed to the sovereignty of States. But its scope can and should be limited in the case of serious violations of human rights and of humanitarian law. The Security Council is taking steps in that direction, and France supports this development.

Meanwhile, crimes against humanity are being suppressed more effectively with the establishment of the International Criminal Court, whose jurisdiction is universal. This historic step forward must be accompanied by a strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, under a commission equipped to discharge its duties and its mission.

We now realize that globalization demands stronger economic, social and environmental governance. To that end, France proposes the creation of a new political forum representative of the present economic state of today's world in all its diversity. That council would be responsible for providing the necessary impetus to international institutions, for improving their coordination and for anticipating and tackling global problems more effectively.

Effectiveness also depends on increased financial resources. France calls for two changes.

First, the trend towards increasing voluntary contributions at the expense of mandatory contributions must be reversed. Failing that, we will end up with a pick-and-choose United Nations, which is an outdated vision and a harmful one.

Secondly, we need to make progress in mobilizing funds for development and development assistance. France wants to meet the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent by the year 2012. But this effort, together with that of the European Union, will obviously not suffice to release the necessary funds needed to finance the Millennium Goals each year. France therefore supports the innovative concept of an international financial facility. I would also like us to give pragmatic, speedy consideration to international solidarity levies, a kind of tax on the wealth generated by globalization and given over to development.

To advance on these issues, I completely approve of the Secretary-General's intention to gather around him a committee of independent wise men and women responsible for submitting proposals.

Against the risk of a world without order delivered up to violence, let us work to establish the rule of international law. Against the injustice and suffering of a world of widening inequalities — even though it has never been so rich — let us choose solidarity. Against the chaos of a world shaken by ecological disasters, let us call for a sharing of responsibility around a United Nations environmental organization. Against the barbarity of a world in which fundamental rights are all too often held up to ridicule, where the integrity of mankind is under threat, where indigenous peoples — the heirs to an irreplaceable heritage — vanish amid silence and indifference, let us uphold the demands of ethics. Against the peril of a clash of civilizations, finally, let us insist on the equal dignity of cultures, respect for diversity and the value of dialogue.

With the Charter adopted in the name of the Peoples of the United Nations, the founders proclaimed their faith in these ideals. Let us seek to be worthy of them. Let us establish the United Nations at the heart of this planetary democracy that is so vital in our day and age.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the French Republic for the statement that he just made.

*Mr. Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Joseph Urusemal, President of the Federated States of Micronesia**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

*Mr. Joseph Urusemal, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Joseph Urusemal, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Urusemal**: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. My Government is deeply gratified by the recognition of your accomplishments, especially given that you are a fellow islander. We are confident you will lead the work of this body with the same high competence as your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic.

Before going further I must pause in respectful remembrance of the second anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. We honour the memory of all who were lost. I must also express our sincere condolences over the great loss of life recently at the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad.

I am grateful for the privilege of appearing before this body for the first time, as President of the Federated States of Micronesia. We feel a deep sense of responsibility in joining with nations present here to work toward a better world for all peoples.

For the past several years, much of the discussion here and elsewhere has focused on political challenges around the world. After 11 September, it is not at all surprising that these challenges have commanded the lion's share of everyone's attention. We in the Federated States of Micronesia remain committed to the eradication of terrorism in all its forms, and will continue to play the role open to us as the world strives to reach this goal.

However, the challenges of the environment and of sustainable development that occupied so much of our attention during the 1990s have not gone away. Despite the immediacy of so many pressing demands today, those remain challenges that the international community cannot afford to put on hold. We cannot put them on hold because they are part and parcel of the worldwide security challenge, especially over the longer term.

No part of our world is immune to the wide range of fundamental security threats. War and terrorism are only consequences of their deeper root causes: poverty, human injustice and, more recently, environmental degradation. These are most often discussed in the context of the more populous regions of the world, but I ask the Assembly not to overlook the fact that they also present themselves to the small island developing States.

The unique vulnerability of our island States to all those scourges is widely recognized. Even so, global threat assessments most often are not followed up by a realistic allocation of resources to the more remote — yet also more vulnerable — places, where threats to global security often find their origin or seek refuge. I submit to the Assembly that the region of the Pacific islands has for too long been overlooked in that way.

We welcomed the initiative of the international community to address those and related development problems during the World Summit on Sustainable Development. But we returned home, and we still find ourselves struggling just as much as ever with fundamental needs. As memories of Johannesburg are pushed into the background by seemingly more urgent crises, our people are beginning to ask questions about this process. They are asking whether repetitious discussion of traditional development strategies at a lengthening string of summit venues offers the most productive avenue for achieving real development

goals. We must consider these things with a broader consciousness. The challenges are enormous, and they are immediate. I say to the Assembly respectfully that business-as-usual multilateralism is not getting the job done.

Before proceeding, I should say that today's Micronesians do enjoy a much-improved standard of living in comparison with the conditions that existed when we were introduced to the world economy less than 50 years ago. However, we still have very far to go before we can reach the levels of even the moderately successful developing countries, let alone of the industrialized world.

In saying what I do here about my own country's difficulties, I must add that we are by no means alone. Therefore, we stand with developing countries everywhere, and we fully support the positions to be expressed here by His Majesty the King of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by His Excellency the Prime Minister of Mauritius on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

We must all do more. For our part, the small island developing States need to ensure that we meet our obligations and fulfil our undertakings to the global community. We are not just supplicants; we have roles to play. My country has made commitments to environmental responsibility in line with our capacity. We have pledged increased accountability and oversight of development assistance. We have resolved to build our capacity to govern more effectively and to increase regional interaction.

I believe that all developing countries should explore how we can mobilize our limited resources, individually and collectively, even as we seek assistance. In that regard, I commend to the Assembly's attention the communiqué of the Pacific Islands Forum issued this year at Auckland, New Zealand. It is illustrative of the kind of regional collaboration I encourage here. For example, we in the Forum agreed this year to an important and comprehensive statement of principles fundamental to good governmental leadership and recognized by all. I think that it deserves close study by the Assembly. Serious attention was also given by the Forum leaders to the challenges presented by international criminal elements attracted to our region. They are attracted in part by our "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" status. It was recognized at the Forum that, given our limitations individually, we can confront those challenges only through regional, collective action.

We are also now seeing, more than ever before, entire regions of the world marginalized in the global economy, as witness the sad breakdown of the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings recently. Some countries have been virtually ignored until social and political conditions have severely deteriorated.

We are hearing more frequently the term "failed State". It has no clear definition, but it has been used on occasion to justify outside intervention. That may be necessary under certain circumstances, but it is in the interests of all that such conditions should not develop in the first place. I submit that the causes of any such so-called failure can be traced far beyond the borders of the unfortunate country that is so labelled.

The time is ripe for a new way of looking at international peace and security. No longer can economic, social and environmental issues exist in a parallel universe, divorced from geopolitical considerations. The linkages are becoming all too clear, as the alarming findings of this year's United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals confirm.

Despite our best efforts, we still face the full range of threats to our natural environment. Those threats are not diminishing. In fact, on a global scale, progress by the world community has been glacial in the face of ever more pressing demands for action. We may say to ourselves that any disastrous outcomes lie well in the future, but we can act only in the present. We are literally making — or failing to make — life decisions for the yet-unborn.

One of the most clear and present emergencies has figured prominently in our statements in the general debate every year since our country became a United Nations Member; I refer to the need for immediate international action to combat climate change. Regrettably, I cannot speak with any less concern this year. If anything, our appeals must become more urgent. At a time when we speak of many wars, there is also the war against climate change — a war that mankind cannot afford to lose.

I know you can appreciate better than most, Mr. President, that, for my family and me, the issue of climate change is a present reality. My island, Woleai,

in Yap State, is an atoll with no point higher than two meters above sea level. The frequency and the intensity of storms in our region have been increasing for some time.

During the last year we experienced three major typhoons, as well as other destructive storms. One of them triggered massive mudslides on the state of Chuuk's higher islands, and 50 people died. In Yap state, a recent storm washed away a large and very old cemetery. These and similar recent events in our other states are unprecedented. Everything we are, and hope to achieve as a people, is under grave threat because of global climate change.

Having confirmed that the climate change crisis is real, the entire world also now possesses indisputable evidence that its steady progression can be laid at the doorstep of human activity. Yet some of the worst polluters among the industrialized countries see it as their top priority to protect vested interests. They are purposely delaying the immediate action that is required to begin to turn the tide of destructive climate alteration.

In the Framework Convention, it was agreed by all that those bearing the responsibility for causing this problem must take the lead in resolving it. Yet, I must ask today, where is that leadership?

It is very sad that the Kyoto Protocol, which is a positive achievement, has been converted by some Governments into a political target — a rallying cry for the worst polluters. In fact, it represents nothing more than a small first step that must be followed up by strong subsequent actions if the war against climate change is to be at all effective. The scornful attitude toward the Protocol shown by some countries will doom the entire Framework Convention to utter failure if the current situation remains unchanged. The Kyoto Protocol must be brought into effect without further delay. The industrial Powers cannot continue to make the plea of Saint Augustine, "Lord, make me thy servant, but not yet awhile."

Since our people live in such close harmony with the natural environment, we also face a host of other pressing environmental issues. Our coral reefs are getting a great deal of international attention partly because of their potential for commercial exploitation. We appreciate those possibilities and are determined to preserve our legal rights in any exploitation that takes place.

But we also appreciate the reefs as our natural buffers against the sea and the hosts for marine resources far beyond the regular bounty of present-day fishing. This is more than a resource; it is a lifeline for many island countries. The serious decline in the health of coral reefs all over the world must be reversed.

Stocks of our only substantial economic resource — tuna — have seen a marked decline in recent years. Other species and key elements of the ocean ecosystem are also now imperilled as never before. The Federated States of Micronesia will be lobbying for an aggressive oceans resource protection policy in both the regional and international arenas.

Water itself, and access to it, is very much a threatened resource in our country, where we are surrounded by the ocean but have limited fresh water. We rely upon rainwater and its collection in the lenses that lies beneath our atolls. Every drop is precious. We say that a vulnerable life, such as that of a child, is like morning dew on a taro leaf, to be handled with care so that it does not slip away.

Members may be surprised to learn that islands in the Pacific Ocean, so often pictured in everyone's dream of paradise, are more concerned about drought than any other natural threat, including typhoons. Not only do we experience the salt-water corruption of our fresh water and our food crops, as a result of increased storm activity and sea-level rise, we also now must try to cope with droughts brought on by increasingly unpredictable El Niño activity linked to climate change.

Fortunately, the world in general seems to be waking up to the universal human requirement for access to adequate, clean water. The special exposure of island countries received welcome attention at the recent Third World Water Forum in Kyoto. In addition, I wish to point to a very important, first-ever interregional collaboration on this vital subject, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding recently concluded between our South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute.

I have spoken much about my country's concerns but, of course, we are not alone in these concerns. The world's small island developing States face largely the same set of issues in different degrees.

For that reason, we were grateful for the international attention generated by the first United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994. The Barbados Programme of Action, which was the product of that Conference, has been a limited success. The Conference succeeded in focusing attention on the unique set of problems our small island nations face. However, it seems that the international community has to some extent been content to raise awareness of the issues, while showing a waning interest in implementing specific measures during the years following the Conference itself.

We applaud the decision to hold a follow-up conference in Mauritius in 2004, and we look forward to a frank evaluation of the progress, or lack thereof, in implementing the Barbados Plan of Action during the past 10 years. It is my hope that the Mauritius conference will afford an opportunity to regain lost momentum.

This is a landmark year for my nation. We have completed 17 years in a post-trusteeship political relationship with the United States. By all accounts, this has been a success. Never before has free association been attempted on this scale.

I am pleased that both my country and our development partner, the United States, have seen fit to continue this relationship into the future by amending the treaty between us known as the Compact of Free Association. As we celebrate the success that this renewal represents, it is proper to recall the long and effective stewardship of our region by the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

We are grateful for the lasting contribution of the United Nations system to the history of Micronesia, and we look forward to continuing to work in this body and others in the United Nations system to reach our collective goals.

In closing, I would like to refer to the words of the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who once said,

> "If I were asked to state the great objective which church and state are both demanding for the sake of every man and woman and child in this country, I would say that the great objective is a more abundant life."

I believe that the President was speaking of true abundance, not only in a material sense, but also in the sense of the security of mind and body that comes with freedom, opportunity and human fulfilment.

We must ask ourselves whether what we are striving for here at the United Nations is faithful to that lofty ideal. This Organization is the greatest forum ever created on this planet. It cannot afford to allow its important role in conflict management to push aside the even greater task of managing the conditions that produce those conflicts. We bring together here, under the guidance of the Charter, for the first time in human history, all kinds of resources necessary to lead mankind to a more abundant life. Let it not be said of us later that we failed in that task.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Joseph Urusemal, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## Address by Mr. Pascal Couchepin, President of the Swiss Confederation

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

*Mr. Pascal Couchepin, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Pascal Couchepin, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Couchepin**: In 2000, at the dawn of the new millennium, the heads of State and Government of the Member States met here to reaffirm their shared goals. Three years later, that international consensus has eroded. Member States perceive threats differently, and they do not share the same priorities. Some States emphasize the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In other regions in the world, civil wars, small arms, poverty, hunger and AIDS are the main dangers.

Can the international community reach a consensus on the objectives to be attained and the way to achieve them? What importance should we give to multilateral cooperation? Has the time not come to review the system of collective security inherited from the Second World War? Could it be that the United Nations is due for far-reaching reform?

The fact that so many heads of State and Government have responded to the Secretary-General's invitation is a preliminary answer. It is an encouraging sign. The Member States look to the United Nations to seek solutions. We must seize the opportunity of this debate to reaffirm our commitment to multilateral cooperation and the goals of the United Nations.

Life in society demands a minimum of order, rules and solidarity. That also applies to international relations. Switzerland attaches great importance to respect for international law, which explains its commitment to humanitarian law or to the International Criminal Court. Without international law, many countries would feel themselves at the mercy of the law of the mightiest. The great powers, like the smaller ones, need a multilateral framework to resolve their differences.

The time has come to rethink the role of the United Nations. Almost 60 years after the foundation of the Organization, the threats have changed, as have the geopolitical realities. Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have taken on more threatening dimensions. Civil wars have multiplied. AIDS has become the most deadly epidemic in the history of humankind. Poverty is far from being eradicated.

Security can no longer be addressed in purely military terms. We need to review our vision of security by focusing greater attention on individuals. By broadening our approach to security and by placing fresh emphasis on human security, we can overcome some of the current differences between the North and the South.

Together with other countries, Switzerland is endeavouring to promote the idea of human security. This year it will commit itself to the issues of the proliferation of light weapons and anti-personnel mines. We hope the General Assembly will establish a working group to develop an instrument for marking and tracing small arms. If the Members of the Organization concur, Switzerland is ready to take the chair.

The Swiss Government also takes an active interest in the issue of migration. We are working with other countries to establish a global commission on international migration, which will be asked to make recommendations.

In order to promote human security, we must also keep the promises made in the field of development. In the Millennium Declaration we have undertaken to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all humankind. To that end, we have adopted a series of clear objectives, and deadlines to meet them have been set. But merely proclaiming goals is not enough; we must now fulfil them. If the rich countries — and my country is among them — do not keep their promises, they will end up causing poor countries to lose hope.

In Cancun, the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) tried to revive trade liberalization. Although positions converged somewhat, disagreements persist and there is a risk of lasting failure. That would result in weakened growth at the global level, to the detriment of all countries. We need to give negotiations another chance and, above all, avoid the lure of protectionism.

To affirm a belief in the multilateral system should not blind us to its weak points. The United Nations needs more thorough reform.

Switzerland considers that the role of the United Nations in the economic and social fields must be defined. We must better take account of the links between international security and economic development. Relations between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO should also be reconsidered by a group of independent eminent persons.

We must also focus our attention on the functioning of the Organization itself. In the General Assembly, resolutions that are adopted are too often reduced to the lowest common denominator or to a long, vague wish list, with no real impact. The Assembly must be revitalized. There is a need to reduce the number of agenda items, limit the length of texts and avoid the proliferation of resolutions on issues that overlap.

With regard to the Security Council, a consensus already exists on the fact that its composition no longer

sufficiently reflects contemporary geopolitical realities. Switzerland supports the idea of enlarging the Council. That could be done without harming its effectiveness as long as the increase in the number of members remains within reasonable bounds and takes into account the various regional sensibilities.

In the last few years, countries not members of the Council have been given more opportunities to participate in the Council's work. Switzerland welcomes those efforts. However, the crucial decisions too often remain confined to the restricted circle of the five permanent members. All members of the Security Council should be permanently involved in the decision-making process. It is also important to institutionalize the modalities of participation for the other Member States. For example, consultation mechanisms with those States most directly affected by conflict areas should be strengthened. It should be necessary for non-permanent members of the Council to feel a greater responsibility to represent the views of those who elected them.

The right of veto is a privilege involving special responsibilities. It should be used only in exceptional circumstances. When a permanent member exercises its right of veto, would it not be desirable for it then to explain its action to the General Assembly? That way, that member could make its position better understood by the international community.

Another goal is to open the United Nations to civil society. Switzerland welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to set up a panel of experts to consider the possible ways to achieve that.

It is in this spirit of openness towards civil society that preparations are being carried out for the World Summit on the Information Society, due to take place in Geneva in December. More than half of the world's population does not have access to a telephone. The use of Internet is even more limited. The goal of the Summit, a part of the larger framework of the Millennium Goals, is to discuss ways to narrow the digital divide between the rich and poor countries. New technologies must be placed at the service of development, human rights and democracy.

I invite all Member States to participate actively in the Summit. Many heads of State and Government have announced their intention to attend, which gives me great pleasure. I must address, above all, my colleagues of the industrialized countries: we must shoulder our responsibilities. I appeal to them not to miss that important appointment. We need a North-South dialogue at the highest level. As I have already said, we must keep our promises.

In recent months, Iraq has made visible some international tensions. We must now search together to find solutions for the future. We all face the same danger: that of Iraq falling prey to disorder and instability. The United Nations must be given its place in Iraq and must receive a clearer mandate from the Security Council. At the same time, determined progress must be made towards restoring Iraqi sovereignty.

In its national history, Switzerland has a long tradition of harmonious coexistence among its different communities. We well understand that no single political model fits all situations. Nevertheless, Switzerland is ready to share its experience and to provide support for the process of drawing up a new constitution in Iraq.

Switzerland joined the United Nations as a neutral country. That does not prevent it from defending the universal values to which it is attached. In this, Switzerland wishes to collaborate with the other Member States, drawing on the strength of the Organization. At this point, I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations and all its staff, who have just suffered a deadly attack in Baghdad. Every day, throughout the world, the United Nations and its specialized agencies do irreplaceable work.

The Secretary-General has spoken of peace as a dream in suspense. I believe that this also applies to the other ideals for which the United Nations stands: justice, solidarity and respect for human dignity. Dreams are an essential part of the vision of the United Nations, but so are action, realism, courage and perseverance.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Swiss Confederation for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Pascal Couchepin, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa**

**The President**: The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

*Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Mbeki**: May I congratulate you, Sir, for assuming the mantle of the presidency for this session of the Assembly and thank the outgoing President, Mr. Jan Kavan. I would also like to echo what other speakers have said about the death of the dedicated United Nations workers who lost their lives in the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad last month, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, an outstanding international civil servant.

When we met here last year, we were all concerned about what would happen in Iraq. At the same time, we were concerned about what role the United Nations would play in the resolution of the Iraq affair. Dramatic events since then have provided answers to those questions. However, those dramatic events have raised important and disturbing questions about the very future of the United Nations. Central among them is the question, does the United Nations have a future as a strong and effective multilateral organization enjoying the confidence of the peoples of the world and capable of addressing the matters that are of concern to all humanity?

Quite correctly, as we meet here this time, while still preoccupied by the issue of the future of Iraq, I am certain that none of us wants to rehash the debate that took place on this matter in the period following the last general debate in the General Assembly. While for some time after that general debate we were concerned to provide answers to questions about the role of the United Nations in Iraq, today we have to answer questions about the impact of the Iraq affair on the future of the United Nations. Matters have evolved in such a manner that to our limited understanding it seems extremely difficult to resolve the issue of the role of the United Nations in Iraq, unless we answer the question about the future of the United Nations as a legitimate expression of the collective will of the peoples of the world and the principal guarantor of international peace and security, among other global issues.

*Mr. Kirn (Slovenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Put differently, we could say that what is decided about the role of the United Nations in Iraq will at the same time decide what will become of the United Nations in the context of its Charter and of the important global objectives that have been set since the Charter was adopted.

This is not a case of the tail wagging the dog; rather, history has placed at our feet an urgent and practical test case that obliges us to answer the question: what do we, collectively, want the United Nations to be? What do we do to distinguish the trees from the forest? In that regard we must make the point directly, that as South Africans, we are partners and activists who campaign in favour of a strong and effective United Nations. We do so because of the place our country and people occupy in the contemporary world.

We believe that everything that has happened places an obligation on the United Nations to reflect on a number of fundamental issues that are of critical importance to the evolution of human society. We are convinced that this General Assembly would disappoint the expectations of the peoples of the world and put itself in jeopardy if, for any reason whatsoever, it did not address these issues.

We speak as we do because we represent the people who are more sensitive to the imperatives of what the world decides, given our experience during a period when apartheid South Africa was correctly a matter of focused and sustained interest by the United Nations and the peoples of the world, including ordinary folk, even in the most marginalized areas of our globe.

This Organization, and all of us singly and collectively, has spoken and frequently speaks about the phenomenon of globalization. Correctly, we speak of a global village driven by recognition of the fact of the integration of all peoples within a common and interdependent global society.

Certainly, humanity is more integrated today than it was when the United Nations was established more than fifty years ago. However, many have drawn attention to the fact that, whereas objective social processes have led to the emergence of the global village, all of our political collectives have not yet succeeded in designing the institutions of governance made necessary by the reality of the birth of this global village.

Correct observations have also been made that the use of the image and concept of the village does not imply that the residents of this village are equal. The reality is that the same processes that bring all of us closer together in a global village are simultaneously placing the residents of the global village in different positions. Some have emerged as dominant, and the rest as the dominated, with the dominant being the decision makers and the dominated being the recipients and implementers of those decisions.

To the same extent that our political collectives have not designed the institutions responsive to the evolution of the global village, so have they failed to respond to the imbalance in the distribution of power inherent in contemporary global human society. We speak here of power in all fields of human activity. Left to its internal and autonomous impulses, the process of globalization will inevitably result in the further enhancement of the domination of the dominant and the entrenchment of the subservience of the dominated, however much the latter might resent such domination.

This will include the perpetuation of the dominant positions by those who are dominant to ensure the sustenance of their capacity to set the agenda of the global village in the interest of their own neighbourhoods within that village. Inherent within this is, necessarily, reliance on the use of superior power, of which the dominant dispose, to achieve the objective of the perpetuation of the situation of an unequal distribution of power.

In this situation, it is inevitable that the pursuit of power in itself will assert itself as a unique legitimate objective, apparently detached from any need to define the uses of such power. This also signifies the deification of force in all its forms as the final arbiter in the ordering of human affairs.

However, from the point of view of the disempowered, the struggle to ensure the use of such power to address their own interests becomes a strategic objective they cannot avoid. Necessarily this means that power would have to be redistributed. That would be done to empower the disempowered and to regulate the use of power by those who are powerful.

Thus we come back to what I said earlier. Because we are poor, we are partisan activists for a strong, effective and popularly accepted United Nations. We take those positions because there is no way in which we could advance the interests of the people, the majority of whom are poor, outside the context of a strong, effective and popularly accepted United Nations. An autonomous process of globalization, driven by its own internal regularities, can only result in the determination of our future within the parameters set by those who enjoy the superiority of power. The powerful will do this in their own interests, which might not coincide with ours.

When this Organization was established 58 years ago, its objectives and institutions necessarily reflected both the collective global concerns as then perceived and the then balance of power.

Among other things, our esteemed Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has drawn attention to the fact that the United Nations started off as an Organization of 51 States and is now composed of 191 States. Undoubtedly, the perceived and real collective global concerns of our day are, to some extent at least, different from those that prevailed more than 50 years ago, when the Organization was about a quarter of its present size.

For more than a decade, this Organization has been involved in discussions about its transformation. Once more, the Secretary-General has reflected on this challenge. The truth is that our discussions have gone nowhere. Earlier this morning the Secretary-General announced steps he will take to facilitate the adoption of decisions that will help all of us to effect the necessary and inevitable transformation of the United Nations. We support the decisions he announced.

The global resolve to defeat such organizations as al Qaeda has emerged out of our understanding that international aggression should not necessarily be expected to come from formal and recognized State institutions. We have all come to understand that such a threat coming from non-State institutions would express itself as the most inhumane and despicable terrorism, as was most painfully demonstrated on 11 September 2001.

r collective experience — stretching from New York and elsewhere in the United States on 11 September 2001; and reaching back to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, in Africa, earlier still; and, more recently, to Bali, Indonesia; to Morocco; to the conflict between Israel and Palestine; to Algeria, India, Russia and elsewhere; and even our own country — tells us that the United Nations, working in defence of the collective interests of the peoples of the world, must ensure that we act together to defeat the threat of terrorism, collectively defined.

At the same time, we have to take on board the conviction among some of our Member States that they constitute special and particular targets of global terrorism. Understandably, the argument is advanced that it would be unreasonable and irrational to expect such States not to act to deter such terrorist actions against themselves. None of us can defend international rules that prescribe that any one of us should wait to be attacked knowing in specific ways that we were going to be attacked by identified terrorists, and then act against those who had attacked us, with such horrendous costs as were experienced by the United States during the 11 September attacks. I do not imagine that any one of us would seek to impose such a costly and unsustainable burden on any of our Member States, which would also violate the self-defence provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

We also have no choice but to deal with the brute reality that the reform process of the United Nations and all its bodies, and other multilateral organizations, has got to recognize the reality of the imbalance of power, as represented by different countries and regions. At the same time, we must proceed from the position that such distribution of power is not necessarily in the interests of the peoples of the world, or even in the interests of those who today have the power to determine what happens to our common world. That includes acceptance of the fact that, depending on the place we occupy in the global community, we have different priorities. Among other things, the rich are concerned about ways and means to maintain the status quo, from which they benefit. In practical terms that means that all matters that threaten to destabilize the status quo must necessarily be anathema to such people. Such matters will therefore be an issue of principal concern to them. Necessarily and understandably, they will then seek to get the rest of the world to accept their assertion that the maintenance of the status quo must be a universal human preoccupation, precisely the kind of issue on which the United Nations must take a united position.

On the other hand, the poor are interested in changing their conditions for the better. Accordingly, they will not accept the maintenance of the status quo, which perpetuates their poverty. Accordingly, among other things, the poor billions of the world will argue for action by the United Nations to ensure the transfer of resources to themselves, which will enable them to extricate themselves from their condition of poverty and underdevelopment, consistent with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the objectives of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and other international agreements. Inevitably, that will run counter to the propositions of those who are more powerful than the poor, namely, the Governments, peoples and countries that keep them afloat with development assistance. That will require — whether it is stated or not — that the recipients of that assistance understand that such assistance can dry up.

Important shifts in the global balance of power and global objectives have taken place since the United Nations was established, 58 years ago. The Organization has not substantially changed, in terms of its structures and mode of functioning, to reflect those changes. That has served as a recipe for an inevitable crisis, a disaster waiting to occur. And so as we meet today we are confronted by global challenges that the global Organization cannot solve. Impelled by the urgent issues of the day, some of the powerful will not wait for all of us to respond to the problems we have raised, and which they face. They will act to solve those problems; their actions will make the statement that they do not need the United Nations to find solutions to those problems. Simultaneously, that will make the practical statement that the United Nations is irrelevant to the solution of the most pending problems of our day. The disempowered will continue to look to the Organization, understanding, correctly, that they are too weak to advance their interests singly outside the collective voice of the United Nations. In that regard, they expect that the United Nations will be informed by its founding documents and other solemn decisions it has taken since it was established, all of which have been approved by successive sessions of the General Assembly.

Global poverty and underdevelopment are the principal problems that face the United Nations. Billions across the world expect that the General Assembly will address that challenge in a meaningful manner. The masses of people of our world expect that the statements we will make at this session of the General Assembly as representatives of various Governments will indicate a serious commitment to implement what we say. The poor of the world expect an end to violence and war everywhere. They want an end to the killing that is taking too many Israeli and Palestinian lives. They want Africans to stop killing one another, continuing to convey the message that we are incapable of living in peace among ourselves. They desire the realization of the democratic objective universally: that the people shall govern. They believe that we are seriously committed to the objective of the eradication of poverty and the provision of a better life for all. They think that we mean it when we say that we will not allow the process of globalization to result in the further enrichment of the rich and the impoverishment of the poor within and between countries. They believe us when we say that our collective future is one of hope, and not despair. They are keenly interested to know whether our gathering, the United Nations General Assembly, will produce those results.

To collectively meet those requirements will require that each and every one of us — both rich and poor, the powerful and the disempowered — commit ourselves practically to act in all circumstances in a manner that recognizes and respects the fact that none of us is an island sufficient unto ourselves. That includes the most powerful. The latter face the interesting challenge, important to themselves in their national interests, that the poverty and disempowerment of the billions will no longer serve as a condition for their success and their possibility to prosper in conditions of peace.

What we have said today may not be heard, because we do not have the strength to have our voice heard. Tomorrow we may be obliged to say, No more water; the fire next time. As the fires burn, the United Nations will die, consumed by the flames. So will the hopes of the poor of the world die, as they did at Cancun, Mexico, not so long ago. We must act together to say in our words and in our actions, as countries and as the United Nations, that there will be water next time, and not fire.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic South Africa for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Croatia.

*Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Mesić** (*spoke in Croatian; English text provided by the delegation*): Seldom has the world's attention been so focused on the United Nations; seldom has so much been expected of this Organization. The question now being asked throughout the world is: "Is the United Nations experiencing the deepest crisis in its history, and does it still play a fundamental role in international relations?"

Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the main reason for the existence of our Organization is the same as it was 60 years ago: to maintain world peace, reached at the cost of millions of lives; and to contribute, in an ongoing manner, to the well-being of humankind all over the world.

We live in a world where no one can go it alone, without the help of others, however big and powerful they may be. Global solutions require the concerted and united efforts of all countries and of all the inhabitants of our planet.

Our Organization is a joint effort by the world community that is persistently searching for solutions to the ever-growing problems of our time. I emphasize the phrase "our Organization", for sometimes it seems that we expect the United Nations administration alone to solve our problems. We tend to forget that the

United Nations is not some abstract institution with a will of its own — one that we depend on — but that the United Nations is the will of each and every one of its 191 Member States. We alone are responsible for the will, the decisions, the work and the activities of the United Nations.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the United Nations needs to be reformed. In this connection, Croatia welcomes and fully supports the Secretary-General's September report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. When discussing our Organization's reform, especially reform of the Security Council, but also that of the General Assembly, we must be aware that this is a matter of our own political will and readiness to accept change.

Unfortunately, and this should be openly stated, so far there has not been enough political will to move from debates on the subject to actual reform. Croatia is convinced that reform of the Security Council is necessary and should no longer be put off. In fact, we ourselves decided in the Millennium Declaration that we would intensify joint efforts to achieve comprehensive reforms of the Security Council in all its aspects. We have an opportunity to do this at this session of the General Assembly.

Croatia has never been a member of the Security Council. However, in the 1990s Croatia acquired considerable experience in the work of that organ and learned about its good points and its shortcomings, its importance and its true scope. Therefore, unless it adapts to the new realities in international relations, the Council will not be able to maintain its credibility and authority in all parts of the world. What is required is adherence to the principle of equitable representation of all United Nations Members in the Security Council.

Croatia is prepared further to intensify its activities as an active promoter of regional and world peace. With this in mind, Croatia has presented its candidacy for membership in the Security Council for the 2008-2009 mandate. Croatia's membership in the Security Council would represent a great tribute to my country and a recognition of all that has been achieved in bringing peace to South-eastern Europe, which has found the strength, after many years of war, to embrace the path of good-neighbourly relations.

The fight against international terrorism is high on Croatia's list of priorities. Two years after the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, we stand firmly by our American allies and all those who refuse to accept terror, fanaticism and killing as a means of resolving problems between peoples and countries. Our collective duty to maintain international peace and security, which stems from the Charter of the United Nations, provides an international framework for a decisive response to terrorism in the twenty-first century.

Croatia's forces are participating in bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. Croatia is aware of the fact that concerted action by all democratic countries is the best response to terrorism. The fight against terrorism requires not only action by the democratic coalition at a global level, but also that of each of its members at the national and regional levels. It is equally important that we intensify our activities to assist countries lagging behind in economic development and other areas. Inequality, injustice and ignorance are fertile breeding grounds for the seeds of terrorism.

Croatia is still dealing with the consequences of the war imposed on it and does not have the economic resources to participate as a donor in the action for the reconstruction of Iraq. However, Croatia stands ready to offer its wealth of experience in post-war reconstruction, especially in construction work, as well as the knowledge and operative capacities required for dealing with post-war confidence-building, strengthening the country's stability, normalizing life, and mending the tears left by the war in the fabric of civil society. I am thinking in particular of the knowledge and experience acquired in civil police training and activities.

Events in the Middle East confirm that greater courage is required to reach a compromise and ensure coexistence than to wage battles; Croatia knows this all too well. We are also aware of the importance of timely resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly, which must be fine-tuned to meet the challenges and needs of the peace process, keeping abreast of realities in the field and encouraging a greatly needed agreement. We hope that in its forthcoming work the General Assembly will take this into account when adopting new resolutions on the Middle East.

The importance of United Nations peacekeeping operations has been recognized on many occasions. The mandate and character of peacekeeping operations

have been significantly transformed, from operations aimed primarily at disengaging warring parties into complex missions for building democratic systems, protecting and promoting human rights, strengthening civil society and establishing the groundwork for the sustainable development of independent States.

This complexity, and the frequent overlapping of mandates, requires a high degree of expertise in various areas: from holding democratic elections and developing judicial systems to establishing police and military forces that meet international standards and basic international legal regulations.

The United Nations is the only global institution that can respond to the challenges of simultaneously establishing regional stability, introducing post-war reconstruction and building a democratic society.

The United Nations has paid a high price in its peace efforts. I would like to take this occasion to once again express Croatia's condolences to the families of the victims of the recent barbaric attacks on United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, and to re-emphasize that such attacks strengthen our belief that the development of collective security systems and global solidarity must continue.

Croatia is currently participating in five United Nations peacekeeping missions — in Ethiopia and Eritrea, India and Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Western Sahara.

We are determined to further intensify our participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions, in line with our physical and financial capabilities regarding the composition and number of troops deployed, as well as theatres of operation. Croatia feels that as a country that received United Nations peacekeeping forces at a time when its sovereignty and territorial integrity were attacked, and as a country which hosted one of the United Nations most extensive operations, it now has a moral obligation to contribute this experience to securing peace and prosperity in other parts of the world.

I would particularly like to stress the importance of closer cooperation between the Security Council and troop contributing countries. We welcome the positive changes that have so far occurred in this respect. It is also important to ensure the necessary exchange of views between the Security Council and the countries on whose territory the peacekeeping operations are being conducted. This is not only a question of due respect of those countries' sovereignty, but it is also a way of acquiring full insight into its needs and priorities.

I also believe that there is the need for the establishment of closer links and better coordination in the work of the United Nations main bodies, especially between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The Economic and Social Council and its commissions possess exceptional knowledge and experience important for the building of post-conflict societies, something we were able to see for ourselves last year when Croatia presided over this body. The establishment of working groups for Guinea-Bissau and for Burundi were steps in the right direction, and we hope that this experience will be used to further the involvement of the Economic and Social Council in processes of maintaining and building peace.

The Millennium Declaration, this joint vision of all United Nations members for a more just and better world, is a beacon we must follow. Not only must we follow it, we must ensure that its goals are fully implemented. In this context, Croatia would like to see the Economic and Social Council play a greater role in the general implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Therefore, Croatia supports the idea of a high-level dialogue on the achievement of the Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration taking place at the next General Assembly session.

As a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Croatia supports the universal ratification of international instruments in the field of human rights. The Commission should continue unhindered in its activities while carrying out its mandate. In an effort to promote and protect the human rights of all people, Croatia is devoting special attention to the human rights of women, children, refugees and disabled persons, and to the human rights of members of national minorities.

Although much has been done in the past period to improve the position of women in society and promote principles of gender equality, the international community still has an obligation to intensify efforts to prevent all forms of violence against women, and must try to include women in decision-making processes, ensuring empowerment of women at all levels. Against this background I am proud to say that Croatia has

provided the first woman participant in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan.

Apart from terrorism, one of the biggest security threats in the world is the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is, we believe, particularly important in ensuring that the goal of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is attained. We are concerned by the fact that although the Treaty was opened for signature and ratification seven years ago, it still has not entered into force. The universal character of this Treaty is of great significance and we call on all States that have not acceded to the Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

Croatia welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations to raise the level of awareness throughout the world of the importance of the rule of law and of acceding to international instruments in this area. As a member State of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Croatia has actively participated in the pioneering endeavour of setting up a new international order symbolized by the International Criminal Court, which has rightly been termed the embodiment of our collective conscience.

Croatia is firmly set on the path of accession to the European Union. Croatia, whose strategic national goal is to join the European Union, remains dedicated to the continual promotion of friendly relations with all its neighbours and to the policy of open borders, allowing the flow of people, goods and services, but also to that of keeping its borders firmly closed to all forms of transnational crime and illegal migration.

Croatia will continue to actively participate in regional, European and worldwide initiatives and organizations, respecting all its international obligations. For us, the United Nations remains a central point for resolving problems in international relations and for promoting the interests of mankind. I am certain that this year's General Assembly session will reconfirm the importance of the United Nations and open a new chapter in our organization's activities in building peace and security.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Croatia for the statement just made.

*Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## Address by His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will hear an address by His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco.

*King Mohammed VI of Morocco was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**King Mohammed VI** (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on being unanimously elected to chair the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco and of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to assure you of our full support for making a success of this important session.

Realizing what a delicate phase our Organization is going through, many heads of State and Government have accepted the invitation extended to them by Mr. Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General. I should like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to him, once again, for the relentless efforts he is making to shore up the efficiency of the Organization.

This is an emotionally charged moment for me, as I stand on this prestigious rostrum and recall the appeal and initiatives launched by my late grandfather and father, Their Majesties King Mohammed V and King Hassan II, urging concerted action by the international community to speed up decolonization, especially in the Arab Maghreb and on the African continent, and to uphold the principles of peace, coexistence, openness and tolerance.

What we have done, at the international level, has always been guided by the same ideals that inspired the founders of our Organization. It seeks to contribute to the significant cultural accomplishments made by mankind thanks to this institution, to preserve human dignity, and to ensure equality in rights and obligations, not only between men and women, but also among nations, large and small, in full respect of international legality, and in a spirit of freedom and solidarity.

We certainly value the positive and concrete achievements of the Organization. However, in keeping with our firm commitment to its noble mission, we ask ourselves: to what extent has the Organization managed to make peace prevail and to contribute significantly to sustainable development and to the settlement of conflicts arising, more often than not, from colonization, which tore apart entire peoples and nations, especially across our African continent?

Moreover, I should like to assure our brothers and sisters from African States of Morocco's constant and unwavering solidarity as well as of its determination to further expand cooperation with them on political, economic, social and security matters and to support constructive African initiatives. In that context, the international community is called upon to provide tangible support to the African strategy, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which targets the sustainable development of the African continent, mostly through interaction on the part of its subregional entities.

The Millennium Declaration marked a turning point in carrying out the mission unanimously entrusted to the United Nations in the area of sustainable development. Indeed, for the first time, heads of State and Government agreed on specific objectives and targets in the social, economic and educational fields up to the year 2015. As early as January this year, I made a point of assigning to the Chair of the Group of 77 and China the priority task of ensuring follow-up to those commitments and monitoring their integrated implementation. On our Group's initiative, the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to that effect last June, pending a global assessment in 2005.

Although the Group of 77 and China has sought to keep development issues high on the Organization's agenda, one must admit that the main thrust of our efforts has focused on the serious threats posed to world peace in the Middle East region. Despite the efforts undertaken for the settlement of the Palestinian question — whether by the United Nations or by the international Quartet, through the road map — the logic of violence and intransigence continues to hamper the restoration of peace. The sufferings, deprivations and injustices endured daily by the brotherly Palestinian people call for stronger commitment on the part of the international community to achieving irreversible implementation of the road map.

As Chairman of the al-Quds Committee, I wish to say that I am fully prepared to help to find a just and final solution leading to the establishment of a viable Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel, in a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. With the settlement of that issue — which is contingent upon the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories — the region will regain its original status as a land of religious and cultural coexistence.

Similarly, Morocco calls for concerted international action that would enable the brotherly Iraqi people to live in security, stability and freedom and to rebuild their country, while ensuring that their choices are fully respected and that their State's sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity are preserved.

The Mediterranean region is particularly affected by the crises I have just mentioned. We therefore believe that the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue is an element that is key for the region's stability, security and development. In that context, the Kingdom of Morocco has made the strategic choice of opting for the construction of the Arab Maghreb as a region where peace and development may be fostered for the benefit of its members, where there must be no tendency towards balkanization and where the fundamental national attributes of each Member State are fully respected.

The Kingdom of Morocco, guided by that Maghreban ideal and committed to safeguarding its good-neighbourly relations, has agreed to ease the tension fomented on its borders and is endeavouring in all good faith to find an international consensus on the issue of the Moroccan Sahara. The attempts that have been made thus far to reach a solution show that the only way to resolve the issue once and for all is to come up with a realistic and final political solution in keeping with democratic principles, while fully respecting the Kingdom of Morocco's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as the United Nations itself recommended in June 2001. In that connection, I should like once more to officially proclaim Morocco's pledge to cooperate with the United Nations to bring about such a political solution.

Ever since the tragic events of 11 September, the international community has been involved in a resolute fight against international terrorism, which poses a threat to mankind's most sacred values. Last May, the Moroccan nation was itself the target of the odious plague of terrorism in a desperate attempt to challenge the democratic model that Morocco has chosen and to undermine its strong commitment to the values of freedom, tolerance and openness. We should therefore like to insist on the need for intensified international cooperation to eradicate this scourge.

Here, I should like to strongly denounce the confusion deliberately created by those who persistently associate terrorism with Islam, thus choosing to ignore the fact that Islam advocates peace and respect for human life and flatly rejects injustice and aggression.

The United Nations system is now confronted with a deeply troubled international environment and faces new and major challenges. If the United Nations is to play its role as the sole regulator of relations between and among States, it is imperative that we restore to the concept of universalism its original meaning: the obligation shared by all to comply with the same ethics and rules of law and with effective solidarity among all peoples and nations. To attain that objective, mankind must find new reasons to rekindle hope. We must also have faith and confidence in the United Nations to help it recover its standing and its effectiveness. Let us therefore make a common pledge to build up its resources and to strengthen its action. The Assembly may count on the help and support of the King of Morocco so that, together, we may build a safer, more equitable and more humane world.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the King of Morocco for the statement he has just made.

*His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Agenda item 9** (*continued*)

**General debate**

**Address by His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

*Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President:** I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, and invite him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Berlusconi** (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): I have the honour to address the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly on behalf of the European Union, over which Italy presides until 31 December 2003. The associated countries, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, align themselves with this statement.

On this occasion, I cannot forget the sacrifice of Sergio Vieira de Mello and the other United Nations officials who recently fell victim to blind, indiscriminate hatred in Baghdad. Allow me also to pay a tribute to the memory of the Foreign Minister of Sweden, Anna Lindh, the victim of a brutal act of violence. In their memory and in the memory of all those who gave their lives in the service of freedom, democracy and human rights, the European Union pays a heartfelt tribute.

Two weeks ago, we commemorated the second anniversary of 11 September. The European Union remembers with great sorrow the victims of those attacks, when the horror of terrorism struck this city, the United States and the world.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's recent report on the implementation of the development goals indicated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and its conclusions. We share his view that the multilateral institutions should be

updated and strengthened, and we are ready to contribute actively to the goal of building an international order based on effective multilateral institutions and within the fundamental framework of the Charter.

We are all convinced that two of the greatest threats to peace and security today are terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The European Union condemns all acts of terrorism, which are threats to democracy, human rights and economic and social development. We must be firm in our determination to destroy this virus and free present and future generations from its attacks. Efforts to combat terrorism must respect human rights and the fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and humanitarian law.

In this struggle, we are working in close collaboration with and give our full support to the United Nations. It is a battle that must be conducted for the sake of freedom and democracy — the universal values enshrined in the Charter, which should be deeply rooted in the lives of all the peoples of this globalized world.

We must show the same commitment to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their vectors. We cannot shirk our responsibilities. The European Union has doubled its efforts to put an end to this threat to international peace and security. After having recently agreed to an action plan, we are now busy with its implementation. Universal subscription to the main multilateral agreements is at the heart of the European Union's policies.

World peace and security are indivisible. The peoples of Europe are well aware of the need to address both the military and the humanitarian aspects of the North Korean situation. The European Union is closely watching the six-party talks aimed at resolving the current crisis relative to North Korea's nuclear programme. The European Union sends a firm appeal to North Korea to completely dismantle its nuclear programme in a prompt transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, in compliance with the obligations deriving from international non-proliferation agreements.

The European Union reiterates its request to India and Pakistan to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to act in compliance with Security Council resolution 1172 (1998). We forcefully encourage India and Pakistan to pursue a process of political dialogue that will lead to an agreement that is satisfactory to all the parties on all the controversial points, including Kashmir: a problem that cannot be resolved through violence or terrorism.

The European Union expresses its growing concern over the development of the Iranian nuclear programme and the risks of proliferation that it involves. We reiterate our expectation that Iran will demonstrate accelerated cooperation and full transparency with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by acceding to its requests. Urgent and unconditional acceptance, signature and the implementation of an IAEA additional protocol on safeguards are of the utmost importance. The international community would consider it a sign of Iran's commitment to the non-proliferation framework and a step toward the desired reforms.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a priority. It requires constant political pressure and the use of every political and diplomatic instrument available as the first line of defence. We cannot allow weapons of mass destruction to end up in the hands of terrorists or regimes that represent a threat to world peace.

In that context, another grave danger is represented by the increasing spread of light and portable weapons and by the expansion of armed organized violence, whose toll in human lives has begun to exceed the lives lost in wars.

With regard to non-proliferation, the European Union is firmly committed to supporting the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, in pursuit of the following common objectives: strengthening international agreements; increasing support for the monitoring agencies; and intensifying controls over illegal trafficking. Finally, should all political and diplomatic measures fail, recourse to coercive measures provided for by the Charter cannot be ruled out.

However, recourse to force can be avoided if all the instruments of international law, including human rights safeguards, come to prevail in all their effects. We are all persuaded that that is the proper thing to do.

To that end, the European Union considers the International Criminal Court a new instrument with

great powers of deterrence and reiterates its full support for the Court and its universalization.

The EU is and will always remain committed to the promotion and protection of all human rights and all fundamental freedoms. In that context, we reiterate our strong support for achieving universal abolition of the death penalty. In recent years, important progress has been made in that direction, thanks in part to civil society. Abolition is our primary goal. Where capital punishment continues to exist, however, we are requesting that its application be impeded through a general moratorium on executions.

Conflict prevention and crisis management are essential components of the EU's contribution to safeguarding international peace and security. More than 40,000 men and women of the European Union are currently deployed on United Nations-led or -authorized peace operations in the world.

The Union is directly involved in missions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, until a few days ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it demonstrated its will to contribute to the international community's efforts to restore peace and stability in Africa, including by military means.

In light of this concrete commitment, the European Union reaffirms its support for reforming and strengthening United Nations peacekeeping activities.

The decision by the Council of the European Union to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in the area of crisis management reaffirms the Union's strategic relations with the Organization. The Union is now drafting guidelines on the protection of civilians in Union-led peacekeeping operations that will fully reflect United Nations principles.

Democracy is the only system of government that can fully guarantee respect for human rights while fostering development, prosperity and peace. The European Union plans to increase cooperation with countries that share the values of freedom and democracy. In a spirit of openness towards the entire international community, the European Union states its willingness to give support to all States that intend to comply with those principles.

The European Union continues to consider its relations with Africa a priority and recalls the common commitment to strengthen this dialogue. The European Union has expressed a special interest in strengthening African peacekeeping and conflict-resolution capacities, and has also targeted its initiatives in those fields on Africa. We are committed to supporting the efforts of the African Union to establish a regional security mechanism.

The European Union will continue to work for inter-African peace and will support the efforts of African States to end the many conflicts that afflict the continent. Stable conditions for peace cannot be created, however, without a strategy to eradicate the causes of poverty and the social exclusion that fuel so many conflicts in Africa and other regions of the world.

On the long road towards managing globalization and spreading its benefits to all, Europe will remain firmly committed to Africa, and the European Union's privileged partnership with African countries shall continue. In this framework, we reiterate our support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and for the hopes that it represents for African development.

The European Union's special commitment to Africa should also be seen in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, primarily designed to eradicate poverty, hunger, disease, social and gender inequality and environmental degradation. In this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria with a view to eradicating them.

The European Union expresses its deep regret over the failure to achieve substantial progress at the Cancun Conference organized by the World Trade Organization (WTO), especially with regard to agricultural products. We remain convinced that increased liberalization of world trade, together with development cooperation activities, can play a crucial role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for a better world. This is why the European Union believes that it is important to continue the negotiations in the WTO framework with the determination and flexibility needed to honour the commitments enshrined in the Doha Development Agenda.

The European Union has made a financial commitment, in line with the Monterrey objectives, to increase official development assistance to 0.39 per cent of gross national product by 2006.

Our commitment does not stop at financial contributions. We also intend to join our development partners in a process that integrates the fight against poverty and disease with progress in the field of safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance and environmental protection. The protection of our environment, including through implementing the commitments undertaken by signing the Kyoto Protocol, is the benchmark of our ability to foster sustainable development that reconciles the demands of economic and social progress with the need to protect natural resources. Those two goals are not alternatives but rather the pillars of the Johannesburg Declaration.

The European Union appreciates the progress made since the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly following the presentation of the Secretary-General's report on reform, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1). It continues to support the Secretary-General's efforts to implement the reforms needed to bring about efficient management capable of achieving the objectives established for the United Nations by the international community. We will work for the adoption of a budget plan for the 2004-2005 biennium that supports the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the reform process begun during the Assembly's fifty-seventh session.

Safeguarding international peace and security requires a strong commitment to address regional conflicts. A lack of such a commitment could entail increased destabilization, to the detriment of the entire international community.

In the Middle East, the European Union is deeply concerned by the deterioration of relations between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority and reiterates its strong support for the road map, the only hope for lasting peace and for paving the way towards stability and development in the region. The European Union will lend its efforts to this end within the Quartet. To implement the road map, it is also important that the European Union and the Group of Eight countries have a specific and generous commitment to a plan for the comprehensive economic reconstruction of the area. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority must act urgently to implement the commitments contained in the road map.

In Iraq, the European Union has welcomed the end of Saddam Hussain's regime, whose power was built on fear and the violation of human rights. The formation of the Iraqi Governing Council was the first major step towards a representative government of the Iraqi people. The European Union stresses the importance of the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty and the establishment of a fully representative Iraqi Government through democratic elections. The United Nations has a vital role in this process. The upcoming donors conference in Madrid provides a welcome opportunity for all those who share our concern for Iraq's future to make a positive contribution to the political and economic regeneration of Iraq. We recognize that, for the reconstruction process to be successful, it will need to be accompanied by improvements in the security situation.

In Afghanistan, the European Union wishes to express its full appreciation for the work done by the United Nations within the framework of the Bonn process.

We will continue to assure our support for the process of democratization also through assistance to the reconstruction of the country. The European Union underlines the importance of an effective reform in the area of security as the basis for lasting security and stability in Afghanistan and throughout the region. The preparations for the 2004 elections to choose a government and parliament that are representative of all components of Afghan society are of primary importance.

In accordance with the conclusions of the European Council of Thessaloniki, the European Union will continue to work tirelessly in support of the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just, viable and functional solution to the Cyprus problem, consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Relations between the countries of Europe and Latin America are rooted in history and provide the basis for intense collaboration and for the European Union's strong interest in the region. The European Union is committed to further improving the overall arrangements of its relations with the countries of Central and South America.

Lastly, the European Union will continue to support the processes of stabilization, democratization and development in the western Balkans. At the

European Union-Balkan Summit in Thessaloniki, the European Union reaffirmed its full consensus on the future European perspective of the region. The realization of those hopes will depend on the ability of the individual countries in the region to implement institutional, governmental and economic reforms, and on the fulfilment of the political criteria of the European Union, including full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and progress in the field of respect for the rights of minorities.

The events of recent decades have profoundly changed the world order. Today the conditions exist for the democracies of the world to unite in order to spread those values that are the unavoidable premise for all others: freedom and democracy.

In the Millennium Declaration we promised food, water, health and education to the greatest possible number of citizens. Now the democracies must commit themselves to providing, also and above all, the intangible values from which the other, more tangible ones spring, because without the prerequisites of freedom and democracy there can be no hope for lasting peace and development, nor can there be an ultimate defeat of the challenge of poverty.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

*The meeting rose at 2.05 p.m.*